THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Govemment has approved in principle the concept of a Southern Gas Grid. The Southern States have competed a prefeasibility study for the project. The feasibility ot importing gas from Oman/Iran is under study. The Southern Gas Grid Porject can be taken up when sufficient gas is available. Efforts are also being made to import LNG for the Southern States.

(d) The financing pattern for the project will be decided after the availability of natural gas/LNG is known.

Oil Exploration by US Companies

1980. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PAT-NAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether some U.S. companies are being allowed to enter into exploration of oil in the country;

(b) whether some deep water drilling blocks are being offered to these compaines;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the other international companies participating in the exploration of oil in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The names of U.S. compaines who have been awarded contract either on their own or as consortium partners for exploration of oil in the country are given below:—

(1) Okland International LDC, USA
(2) Vaalco Energy Inc., USA
(3) Rexwood Corp., USA
(4) Samson International Ltd., USA
(5) Opseis Geophysical system Inc., USA
(6) Enron Exploration Co., USA
(7) Joshi Technologies Inc., USA
(8) Occidential Internation Exploration & Production Co., USA
(9) Medallion Co., USA

(b) No such proposal is under consideration.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Names of other international companies who have been awarded contracts either on their own or consortiam partners are given below:—

(1) Niko resources Canada
(2) Shell India Production, Develop-ment B.V. Netherlands.
(3) Command Petroleum, Australia.
(4) Tullow Oil Pic, Ireland.
(5) Hardy Oil & Gas, U.K.
(6) Rawa Oil (Singapore) Pte. Ltd., Singapore.

Revision of Oil Production Target by ONGC

1981. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ONGC has revised the crude oil production target from 34.5 million tonnes to 30.5 million tonnes;

(b) if so, reasons therefor; and

(c) the deails of steps taken by Government to increase indigenous production of crude oil, especially from the oilwells in the North-Eastern region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) ONGC revised its projections of crude oil production from the level of 32.80 MMT to 31.092 MMT for the year 1996-97 due to the following reasons:—

— Reduction in anticipated production form the major fields of BRBC especially Bombay High and Neelam, due to unexpected reservoir behaviour, not in" conformity with earlier predictions.

— Constraints in operating conditions on account of law and order prob-